



University of Toronto

FACULTY OF MUSIC

ORFORD STRING QUARTET

ANDREW DAWES, *violin*

KENNETH PERKINS, *violin*

TERENCE HELMER, *viola*

MARCEL ST-CYR, *cello*

3 P.M. WALTER HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1974

QUARTET-IN-RESIDENCE

String Quartet in B flat Major, K.589
(2nd of Prussian)

Mozart

Allegro
Larghetto
Menuetto-moderato
Allegro assai

In 1789-90, Mozart composed the three quartets, K.575, K.589, and K.590 for King Frederick William II of Prussia. Although six quartets were to have been composed only three were completed. Mozart referred to these works as "troublesome", possibly due to the shift in normal balance in order to accomodate the cello, the King's favorite instrument.

The first movement of K.589, in conventional sonata-allegro form, opens with a cantabile theme in both violins. Secondary themes are introduced by the cello in a very high register. Graceful soaring melodies highlight the movement.

The second movement, larghetto, presents an aria-like melody in the high cello range, accompanied by the viola and second violin; the melody is then repeated in the first violin. The movement is characterized by florid scale passages for soloist and accompaniment.

A standard minuet follows, with the first violin carrying the tune, accompanied by the remaining strings. The trio, however, is unique by virtue of its length and its developmental nature. Incessant figuration underlies a rather square tune transformed, in the second section, into a leaping, angular phrase on the first violin.

The compact finale reasserts full equality of all four instruments. The thematic material is skillfully manipulated by means of syncopation, imitation, and inversion. A pleasant contrast to the contrapuntal devices is provided by the last statement of the theme in the first violin, in a sing-song fashion, accompanied by staccato chords in the other instruments.

String Quartet in G Minor, op 10

Debussy

Animé et très décidé
Assez vif et bien rythmé
Andantino, doucement expressif
Très modéré - très mouvementé et avec passion

At the first performance, in 1893, of this, Debussy's only string quartet, the audience consisted of a musical "elite" whom Debussy called the "Mandarins of our class". These purists were unable to

follow the unfolding of the original and lengthy themes; they were disconcerted by the strange coloring of the generating theme, which, with its flattened supertonic in the minor scale imparts the flavor of the Phrygian mode; they were bewildered by the harmonic daring of Debussy. On the other hand, Paul Dukas, a contemporary defended the work in *Revue Hebdomadaire*: "...M. Debussy takes a particular delight in successions of rich harmonies that are dissonant without being crude, and more harmonious in their complexity than any consonance could be; over them, his melody proceeds as a sumptuous carpet of strange coloring that contains no violent or discordant tints..."

The origin of the melodic elements in three of the four movements, is contained in one insignificant triplet figure in the generating theme. The first movement, *animé et très décidé*, is in sonata form. While the generating theme meanders through various instruments, the accompaniment consists of many repeated chords, triplet figures, and *ostinati*. *Ostinato* accompaniments are prevalent throughout the entire quartet. For example, in the middle of this movement, there is a long *ostinato* triplet figure in the cello, while the viola has the generating theme.

Similarly, in the *scherzo*, *assez vif et bien rythmé*, the second theme in the first violin is accompanied by the viola *ostinato*, which is actually the generating theme repeated over 24 bars.

The *andante*, *doucement expressif*, is the only movement that doesn't use the generating figure. Instead, there is a beautiful melody in the first violin, introduced by fragments in the second violin and viola. According to Dukas, "the *Andante* is exquisitely poetical and most delicate in conception".

In the finale, *très mouvementé*, the violin melody in the middle section is based on the augmented values of the generating theme. As in the first two movements, there is again a long *ostinato* section in the cello (35 bars), while the first violin presents the melody in octaves.

INTERMISSION

String Quartet op 130 in B flat Major
Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro
Presto
Andante con moto ma non troppo
Allegro assai
Cavatina - Adagio molto espressivo
Finale - Allegro

Beethoven

This work, composed in 1825, with a new Finale composed in 1826 to replace the Grosse Fuge which originally ended the quartet, was dedicated to Prince Galitzin.

According to Joseph Kerman, author of *The Beethoven Quartets*, this Quartet in B flat is the most problematic of Beethoven's great compositions... "mercurial, brilliant, paradoxical...toying with the dissociation of its own sensibility and toying with the listener's limping powers of prediction".

The introductory theme of the adagio beginning, is used in the development of the allegro first movement. Much of the development is founded on the rhythm of a two-note cadential figure in the fourth bar.

A sudden furious whisper in B flat minor opens the presto, described thus by Kerman: "a rapid short dance starting out with a doublet; a major-key trio extending a new doublet a little farther; a small explosion; and a decorated da-capo which shoots by before we can focus attention on it".

The andante con moto is in abridged sonata form. It is less intense and serious than one would expect in a late work of Beethoven, since the more subjective cavatina is yet to come. Nevertheless, according to Kerman, it offers "such a spontaneous flow of musical notions, such an enchantment of intelligence and warmth that analytical formulations seem somewhat beside the point".

A lively dance movement, allegro assai-alla danza Tedesca, in scherzo form, is followed by the cavatina in E flat, the emotional climax of the Quartet. Beethoven admitted that, "never had one of his own pieces moved him so deeply". The 8 bar middle section, marked "Beklemmt" presents serious contrasts in texture. The melodic line becomes distorted and out of joint with the accompaniment which consists of throbbing triplets.

In the lighthearted, Haydnesque finale, certain features are analogous to the original fugue movement: the tonic arrives by the circle of fifths only at the end of an 8 bar phrase which begins in the submediant; the sharply differentiated episode in A flat is comparable to the A flat section of the fugue; and finally, the exceptionally long and brilliant coda parallels the extended B flat section which ends the Grosse Fuge. (Program notes by Mary O'Keefe).

Next Event: December 17th and 18th, 1974 - Opera Excerpts - MacMillan Theatre, 8 p.m.

Next Orford String Quartet Concert: Sunday, March 16th, 1975.